We have now established our twelve classes for the year. KR – Mrs Riordan, KL – Mrs Lawes, 1/2KB – Mrs Bendall, 1/2MB – Mrs Benson, 1/2S – Mr Snow, 2/3TF – Mr Tedd, Mrs Friend, 3/4B – Mrs Burke, 3/4O – Mrs Osborne, 4/5M – Mrs Mangold, 5/6A – Mr Ainsworth, 5/6B – Mrs Bradkte, 5/6P – Mr Pepper.

Early in 2013 (in the next few days) Westport Public School will launch a new Mobile Phone Website. This site will provide easily accessible, up-to-date information about school happenings on your mobile phone. The site will operate alongside the current Westport Public School website, however is designed to be more user friendly to those accessing information via an Android or Smartphone. The site will also provide links for easy communication with the school and allows for absentee notes to be submitted via your phone. This new initiative is an exciting chapter in technology and communication for our school and has many possibilities for it uses.

You have two options available for accessing the site on your phone. 1. Open your web browser and type the following address into the address bar http://www.rems.mobi/grim.php?id=693 this will open the Westport mobile site. Once the page is open we suggest bookmarking or saving the site to the home screen of your phone for you to view at any time, as you would do an app.

2. The second option requires a QR Code Reader app on your phone. QR Code Readers are available for free from your phone’s app store and takes only a minute or so to install for someone with an iPhone or Android phone. Once installed, scan the QR Code pictured to access the site. The site can then be bookmarked and saved to your home screen for easy reference.

Once on your phone you can use the site to;
- access links to contact the school,
- check important information about up and coming events,
- view an up-to-date school calendar,
- read current and past school newsletters,
- submit an absent or partial absence form to the school,
- locate Westport Public School on a map

In 2013 Westport Public also plans to join the world of social media and begin our own Facebook page. The Facebook page will be used to communicate important information and to celebrate and share good news stories with families. It is not intended that the page be used as a tool for families to communicate with teachers or staff nor will it be used for conversations about school. More on this a little later!

We will begin slowly at first and gradually add to the mobile sites as we go………..

It seems strange to talk about promoting good mental health in children. This a discussion that frequently comes up in the course of a day with many children and parents and the fact that we are all very different! Shouldn’t all children naturally have good mental health habits? After all, childhood is supposed to be a pretty relaxed time of life, free from the pressures and stresses that come hand in hand with adulthood.

Sadly, it doesn’t seem that way. According to the
Australian Psychological Society one in seven Australian children experience some type of mental health issue, with ADHD, anxiety and depression being the most common. Having good mental health doesn’t mean kids don’t experience difficulties or worries. Feeling worried, sad or fearful is normal. Kids who are mentally healthy are equipped to handle many of life’s curve balls that come their way. They also don’t let their emotions overwhelm them. As a result they learn better and have more friends as well. This is an article by leading child and family expert, Michael Gros.

As a parent it’s useful to reflect on the mental health habits that you promote in your kids. Here are ten ways to promote good mental health and wellbeing in kids:

1. **Model good mental health habits:** If you, like many parents, live constantly with stress then consider ways to actively minimise it, such as getting regular exercise, plenty of sleep and doing relaxation. Not only will this improve your mental health, and make you easier to live with, it will send a strong positive message that mental health is important. It’s worth remembering that kids learn what they live, so make sure they see good mental health habits first hand.

2. **Make sure they get enough sleep:** Sleep is the one of the building blocks of mental health and wellbeing. Many children and just about all teenagers are sleep-deprived at the moment. One of the single most powerful strategies to improve kids’ abilities to cope with stressful or changing situations is to ensure they get enough sleep.

3. **Encourage your kids to exercise:** When my mum would tell me all those years ago to turn the television off and go outside and play, she didn’t know she was promoting good mental health. She just knew that physical activity was a good thing for an active growing boy. Kids today get less exercise than those of past generations, which is an impediment to mental health. Exercise stimulates the chemicals that improve mood and release the stress that builds up over a day. An hour’s movement per day seems the minimum for kids. How much exercise does your child receive?

4. **Encourage creative outlets:** Kids should practise creativity if for no other reason than it helps them experience the state of ‘flow’. This is the state of getting so immersed in an activity that you forget about time and place. Writers and other creatives understand the concept of flow. It’s energizing and helps take stressed and worried kids out of themselves.

5. **Provide a space of their own:** Children of all ages benefit from having some space of their own where they can think. Quiet time and down time give boys the chance to let their thoughts wander around inside their heads. It also helps them get to know, and even like, themselves. Boys will often do their best thinking on their own, so they tend to retreat to their caves (bedroom) when things go wrong at school or in their relationships. They need to go within to find their own answer.

6. **Talk about their trouble:** A problem shared is a problem halved. Talking about what’s worrying you is a great way to remove the burden of worry and reduce anxiousness. Some kids bottle up what’s inside, while others will catastrophise a situation, which can make matters seem worse. If your child has a problem let him know that his concerns are important to you. Kids often can’t tell you what may be wrong, so be observant and gently ask questions to help gain a clearer picture of how kids may be feeling.

7. **Help them relax:** Make sure your child has a hobby or activity that relaxes them. The ability to relax and get away from the stresses of everyday life is essential. Some children who have real difficulty switching off may benefit from practising meditation or mindfulness, but most kids just need time to chill out so they can relax naturally. (I personally practise mindfulness and have found it a really helpful way to turn off my brain for a while!)

8. **Have two routines – weekday and weekend:** Most households are pretty highly scheduled these days. There are routines for getting up, coming home, eating meals and going to bed. These structures are necessary when we’re busy. **Families need a second, more relaxed weekend routine that helps kids relax and unwind.** It’s important to have this release valve if families are flat out busy during the week.

9. **Foster volunteering and helpfulness:** Social isolation is a huge predictor of poor mental health. Encourage your child to be connected to and help others in any way possible. Helping others reinforces social connectedness and the importance of being part of a community, as well as providing opportunities for positive recognition.

10. **Bring fun and playfulness into their lives:** Kids should be the kings and queens of play; however, some children live such full-on, organised lives that much of the natural fun and spontaneity has been stripped from their everyday life. Mucking around, which is code for having fun, is something many children of this generation don’t have time for. If you see your child constantly stressed or overwhelmed by events, change the mood by going to a movie, joining them in a game or seeking other ways to have some fun.

These ideas are basic common sense. However, as kids’ lives get busier these essentials get squeezed out. Here’s my recommendation to ensure that mental health habits aren’t overlooked or neglected.

**First,** see these habits as the building blocks of mental health. Don’t ignore or trivialise them. Talk to your children and tie these activities to their mental health. Do this in your own way and your own time.

**Principal**

Dean Sneddon
COMING EVENTS TERM 1 WK 4

Fri 22nd Feb – L.N.C Swimming
Tues 26th Feb – P&C Meeting, 6pm in staffroom
Wed 13th March – School Photos
Thurs 14th March – Community Afternoon Tea
Thurs 28th March – Didgeridone
Fri 29th March – Good Friday
Mon 1st April – Easter Monday

Westport Public School Award Winners

Term 1, Week 3

Merit Awards:
Blade Dungay, Maddison Barrett KL; Ashlee Foley, Corey Durbridge KR; Savannah Medcalf, Zoe Gardner 12MB; Aalia Connell, Phoebe Phillips 12KB; Kirra-Lee Hayes, Lachlan Sharp 12S; John Page, Bill Butlin, Jackara Vale 23FT; Claudia Spokes, Shontai Fernando 34O; Hayden Harry, Breana Fowler 34B; Jorja Freudenstein, Lily Greenwood-Jubb, Noah Lockery 45M; Annalise Stewart, Jacob Sills 56P; Hailey Dolendo, Vivienne Coram 56B; Travis Pascoe, Maddalynn Lack 56A.

LIBRARY NEWS

Little Bookworms

When: Tuesday mornings 9am – 9.40am starting 12th February 2013
Where: Westport Public School Library
Who: Preschoolers and their carers
What: Listen to a story, craft activities and borrowing from the library
Cost: Free

To let us know you are coming or for more information ring the school on 65832944
Bernadette Cassidy

CANTEEN NEWS

Canteen Roster Week 4

- Tues 19/2 – Help needed
- Wed 20/2 – Justine
- Thurs 21/2 – Larisa
- Fri 22/2 – Kelly E
- Mon 25/2 – Libby

Thank you to everyone who supported our Sweethearts and Pirates day. We had lots of volunteers in and would like to say a big thank you to them all including Ingrid our Milko who came in on a Thursday for us.

This week’s Wacky Wednesday Meal is 5 dino nuggets, a mini muffin and any drink for $4.

The friendly staff at Westport are always happy to discuss any aspects of your child’s schooling. Please call the school to arrange a convenient time.

Burraydjarr Youth Group

The Birpai LALC “Burraydjarr Youth Group” will start up again on Wednesday 13 February 2013 at 3:30pm.

The youth group which caters for primary school aged children, is held at the Birpai Land Council premises at 14 Aston Street Port Macquarie. Uncle Bill O’Brien is happy to collect the children from school at 3pm if they need a lift from the school to the youth group. Please give Uncle Bill a call on 0458849066 if your students need a lift.

Move Live Eat Well Thursday Nutrition Initiative

Joshua, Sebastian and Coen

Students lining up for the tasty fruit/vege treats!

In the last two Thursdays at recess our students have enjoyed fruit and vegetables prepared by the canteen and handed out by our House Captains. It has been very popular on both days. We had to double the amount ordered the first time for last Thursday and we have increased the order again for next Thursday.

Our House Captains, Ashlee Berrigan, Harry Butlin, Joshua Holt, Grace Larance, Mariah McInerney, Sebastian Pankiewicz, Tahlia Sheather and Coen Wright have given up their recess time every second Thursday to prepare, hand out and pack away. Thanks for a great effort so far.

It is wonderful to see our students enjoying healthy food. Especially popular at the moment are ‘slinkied’ apples, which are apples that are peeled, sliced into one fine spiral and have the core, taken out by a ‘slinky’ machine. Our House Captains are learning how to use it.

Westport Public also is implementing the Live Life Well program which also addresses health issues. There will be more news next week. As always thanks goes to our hard working canteen staff and parent volunteers. If any parent has time to assist in the canteen they can approach the canteen co-ordinator, Imogen Archer at any time.

Philip von Schoenberg
Co-ordinator
COMMUNITY NOTICES

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK WORKSHOPS

To register for these free workshops: please contact Dee or Donna at the Family Support Network on 6583 4242.

Money Matters

These workshops help families manage their money. Dates: 1st and 15th March or 8th and 22nd March 2013. Time: 10:00am – 11:30 am. Venue: St Joseph’s Family Services, Warlters Street – Port Macquarie.

Home Energy Saver Workshop

Get up-to-date and creative tips on ways to use less energy and save money in your home. Date: 5th April 2013. Time: 10am - 12noon – morning tea included. Venue: St Joseph’s Family Services Port Macquarie.

CELEBRATE JESUS 2013 COMMUNITY FUN DAY

Saturday 16th March, 9am-2pm, Bain Park Wauchope. Free BBQ and Morning Tea. Join us for FREE fun activities including: Face Painting, games, puppets, drama and skits, plaster painting, sausage sizzle, jumping castle, slime, hand massages, clowns, music, balloon animals, food, band – "GARAGE HYMNAL", tea and coffee, teen activities, entertainment from schools and much, much more! Everyone welcome! Everything FREE!

TACKING POINT HOCKEY CLUB

Tacking Point Thunder Hockey Club
Registration Days: Sat 16 & 23 Feb 3pm-5pm - Tacking Point Tavern. Wed 20 & 23 Feb 6pm-7pm - Hockey Field, Ocean Drive. Season begins after next school holidays. Games: Sat Mornings (training Mon 5pm) – all at Port Macquarie Hockey Complex. Fees: $110 ages 4-10, slightly higher for older players. (new players fees includes stick, socks, protective equipment etc). Contact: thundersec@live.com.au or 0423609720

RAINBOW READERS

St Joseph’s Family Services and Birpai LALC invite you to Rainbow Readers 2013. Your child will be read stories and participate in fun activities in the gardens of the Birpai Land Council. Where: Aston Street, Port Macquarie. When: Tues 5th Feb, Tues 5th March and Tues 2nd April. Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 noon. Enjoy friendship, a free cuppa and a yarn. Meet other parents with young children. You may like to bring a folding chair or rug. Contact: Megan or Donna on 6583 4242.

PHYSICAL CULTURE

Physical Culture resumes Tuesday 19th Feb at 8 Milton Circuit Dance Studio. All welcome. Class times are as follows: 5, 6, 7 & 8 years: 3.30 – 4.30pm. 9, 10, 11 & 12 years: 4.30 – 5.30pm. 13, 14, 15 & 16 years: 5.30 – 6.30pm. Ladies and Senior classes also available. Contact Cheryle at Portphysi on 65854224 or 0408231253.